



The MAMMI Study

Women's Voices: Returning to Exercise: Naomi's Story

My name is Naomi. I'm 38, from Dublin, and a mammy to Evan, who's 2-and-a-half, and I'd like to speak about returning to exercise postpartum.

On the Saturday of the May Bank Holiday 2016, I took part in a charity white collar boxing match. I was useless and lost the fight, but I was in the best shape of my life.

Eight weeks later, after four long painful years of trying to conceive, I discovered that our dreams had come true, and I was pregnant. Much to my surprise, I remained in that great shape for a good deal of the pregnancy. I still had my six-pack at ten weeks, and you would have barely noticed my tiny bump at sixteen weeks.

I was however, incredibly tired and exercise of any sort went completely out the window. I took 'eating for two' very seriously too, which didn't help. And in the grander scheme of things, I put on just under two stone during the course of my pregnancy, so that wasn't too bad. For the first couple of weeks after I gave birth, I felt fine about still wearing my maternity clothes.

But, then I won an eight week intensive training session. I found it extremely tough getting up most mornings at five, working out, then coming home to start my day as a mammy. But as tough as it was, I felt an enormous sense of achievement and satisfaction every day as I hobbled out of the gym.

By Christmas, when Evan was almost ten months old, I was back in shape and feeling great. But my shape was different, and I've given up hope of ever getting my six-pack back.

But exercise is an escape for me, not only from my physical body, but it definitely helps my emotional wellness too. Now that my little boy is almost two-and-a-half, I spend the entire day running around, lifting heavy objects, namely, a three stone two-and-a-half year old, and basically working out without even knowing it!

While I may not have time to go to the gym anymore, most days start off with a long walk in the park and an hour in the playground. Evan loves nothing better than getting Mammy and the buggy and making her race, which is basically doing sprints, pushing a three stone, two and-a-half year old in a buggy. There are so many 'Mummy and Baby' fitness classes out there, they are a great way to meet other mums, make friends and create a support network.

I think for me, the most important part message I could give to mums returning to exercise postpartum, is that your workout will never be the same again. Your body will probably never be the same again, and without a doubt, the biggest hurdle is getting out and doing something. But, it's mind over matter, getting to the gym is the hard part, once you're there, you've conquered the biggest hurdle.